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SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS:
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

Final draft of the world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond

Note by the Secretariat

The open-ended working group on youth has the honour to submit to the Economic and Social Council the final draft of the world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1995/251 of 24 July 1995.

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Annex

DRAFT WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

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PREAMBLE

1. The decade since the observance of International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace has been a period during which the world experienced fundamental political, economic and socio-cultural changes. These changes will inevitably affect at least the first decade of the twenty-first century as well.

2. Young people represent agents, beneficiaries and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox: to seek to be integrated into an existing order or to serve as a force to transform that order. Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic settings, aspire to full participation in the life of society.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

3. The World Programme of Action for Youth provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. It contains proposals for action to the year 2000 and beyond aiming at achieving the objectives of the International Youth Year and at fostering conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihood among young people.

4. The Programme of Action focuses in particular on measures to strengthen national capacities in the field of youth and to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society.

I. UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF INTENT ON YOUTH: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIALS

5. States Members of the United Nations have agreed to work towards achievement of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, inter alia the promotion of higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development. Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic situations, aspire towards full participation in the life of society, as provided in the Charter of the United Nations, including:

(a) Attainment of an educational level commensurate with their aspirations;

(b) Access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities;

(c) Food and nutrition adequate for full participation in the life of society;

(d) A physical and social environment that promotes good health and protection from disease and addiction and that is free from all types of violence;

(e) Human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language, religion or any other forms of discrimination;

(f) Participation in decision-making processes;

(g) Places and facilities for cultural, recreational and sports activities to improve the living standards of young people in both rural and urban areas.

6. While the peoples of the United Nations, through their Governments, international organizations and voluntary associations, have done much to ensure that these aspirations may be achieved, including efforts to implement the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth endorsed by the General Assembly in 1985, it is apparent that the changing world social, economic and political situation has created the following conditions that have made this goal more difficult to achieve in many countries:

(a) Claims on the physical and financial resources of States, which have reduced the resources available for youth programmes and activities, particularly in heavily indebted countries;

(b) Inequities in social, economic and political conditions, including racism and xenophobia, that lead to increasing hunger, deterioration in living conditions and poverty among youth and to their marginalization as refugees, displaced persons and migrants;

(c) Increasing difficulty for young people returning from armed conflict and confrontation to be integrated into the community, and access to education and employment;

(d) Continuing discrimination against young women and insufficient access by young women to equal opportunities in employment and education;

(e) High levels of youth unemployment, including long-term unemployment;

(f) Continuing deterioration of the global environment resulting from unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances;

(g) Increasing incidence of diseases, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and other threats to health, such as substance abuse and psychotropic substance addiction, smoking and alcoholism;

(h) Inadequate opportunities for vocational education and training, especially for persons with disabilities;

(i) Changes in the role of the family as a vehicle for shared responsibility and socialization of youth;

(j) The lack of opportunity for young people to participate in the life of society and contribute to its development and well-being;

(k) The prevalence of debilitating disease, hunger and malnutrition that engulfs the life of many young people;

(l) The increasing difficulty for young people to receive family life education as a basis for forming healthy families that foster sharing of responsibilities.

7. These phenomena, among others, are contributing to increased marginalization of young people from the larger society, which depends on youth for its continual renewal.

8. We, the peoples of the United Nations, believe that the following principles, aimed at ensuring the well-being of young women and men and their full and active participation in the society in which they live, are fundamental to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

(a) Every State should provide its young people with opportunities for obtaining education, for acquiring skills and for participating fully in all aspects of society, with a view to, inter alia, acquiring productive employment and leading self-sufficient lives;

(b) Every State should guarantee to all young people the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments related to human rights;

(c) Every State should take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against young women and girls and remove all obstacles to gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women and should ensure full and equal access to education and employment for girls and young women;

(d) Every State should foster mutual respect, tolerance and understanding among young people with different racial, cultural and religious backgrounds;

(e) Every State should endeavour to ensure that its policies relating to young people are informed by accurate data on their situation and needs, and that the public has access to such data to enable it to participate in a meaningful fashion in the decision-making process;

(f) Every State is encouraged to promote education and action aimed at fostering among youth a spirit of peace, cooperation and mutual respect and understanding between nations;

(g) Every State should meet the special needs of young people in the areas of responsible family-planning practice, family life, sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection and AIDS prevention, consistent with the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development, the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development, the Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(h) Environmental protection, promotion and enhancement are among the issues considered by young people to be of prime importance to the future welfare of society. States should therefore actively encourage young people, including youth organizations, to participate actively in programmes, including educational programmes, and actions designed to protect, promote and enhance the environment;

(i) Every State should take measures to develop the possibilities of education and employment of young people with disabilities;

(j) Every State should take measures to improve the fate of young people living in particularly difficult conditions, including by protecting their rights;

(k) Every State should promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of its economic and social policies, giving special attention to youth employment. They should also take measures to eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour;

(l) Every State should provide young people with the health services necessary to ensure their physical and mental well-being, including measures to combat disease such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and to protect them from harmful drugs and the effects of addiction to drugs, tobacco and alcohol;

(m) Every State should place people at the centre of development and direct our economies to meet human needs more effectively and to ensure that young people are active participants and beneficiaries in the process of development.

II. DEVELOPMENT SETTING

9. In 1995, the world youth population - defined by the United Nations as the age cohort 15-24 - is estimated to be 1.03 billion, or 18 per cent of the total world population. The majority of the world youth population (84 per cent in 1995) lives in developing countries. This figure is projected to increase to 89 per cent in 2025. The difficult circumstances that people experience in many developing countries are often even more difficult for young people because of limited opportunities for education and training, viable employment and health and social services, and because of a growing incidence of substance abuse and juvenile delinquency. Many developing countries are also experiencing unprecedented rates of rural-urban migration by young people.

10. Apart from the statistical definition of the term "youth" mentioned above, however, the meaning of the term "youth" varies in different societies around the world. Definitions of youth have changed continuously in response to fluctuating political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances.

11. Young people in industrialized countries comprise a relatively smaller proportion of the total population because of generally lower birth rates and higher levels of life expectancy. They are a social group that faces particular problems and uncertainties regarding its future, problems that relate in part to limited opportunities for appropriate employment.

12. Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face as well as their vision and aspirations are an essential component of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and future generations as well. Thus, there is special need for new impetus to be given to the design and implementation of youth policies and programmes at all levels. The ways in which the challenges and potentials of young people are addressed by policy will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations.

III. STRATEGIES AND POLICY SPECIFICS

13. The General Assembly endorsed the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples in 1965. 1/ From 1965 to 1975, both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council emphasized three basic themes in the field of youth: participation, development and peace. The need for an international policy on youth was emphasized as well. In 1979, the General Assembly, by resolution 34/151, designated 1985 as International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. In 1985, by resolution 40/14, the Assembly endorsed the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth (A/40/256, annex). The guidelines are significant for their focus on young people as a broad category comprising various subgroups, rather than a single demographic entity. They provide proposals for specific measures to address the needs of such subgroups as young people with disabilities, rural and urban youth, and young women.

14. The themes identified by the General Assembly for International Youth Year - namely, participation, development and peace - reflect a predominant concern of the international community with distributive justice, popular participation and quality of life. These were reflected in the guidelines, and they represent overall themes of the World Programme of Action for Youth as well.

15. The World Programme of Action for Youth also builds upon other, recent international instruments, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 2/ the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, 3/ the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, 4/ the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, 5/ and the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women. 6/

16. The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond is drawn from these general and specific international instruments related to youth policies and programmes. The Programme of Action is significant because it provides a cross-sectoral standard relating to both policy-making and programme design and delivery. It will serve as a model for integrated actions, at all levels, to address more effectively problems experienced by young people in various settings and to enhance their participation in society.

17. The World Programme of Action for Youth is divided into three phases: the first phase focuses on analysis and on drafting the Programme of Action and its adoption by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, in 1995; the second phase is concerned with world-wide implementation of the Programme of Action to the year 2000; the third phase, covering the period 2001 to 2010, will focus on further implementation and evaluation of progress made and obstacles encountered; it will suggest appropriate adjustments to long-term objectives and specific measures to improve the situation of young people in the societies in which they live.

IV. PRIORITY AREAS

18. Each of the 10 priority areas identified by the international community is presented in terms of principal issues, specific objectives and the actions proposed to be taken by various actors to achieve those objectives. Objectives and actions reflect the three themes of International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace; they are interlinked and mutually reinforced.

19. The 10 fields of action identified by the international community are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. The Programme of Action does not exclude the possibility of new priorities which may be identified in the future.

20. Implementation of the Programme of Action requires the full enjoyment by young people of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and also requires that Governments take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms, and promote non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, with full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of their young people, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all young women and men.

A. Education

21. Although progress towards universal basic education, including literacy, has been impressive in recent times, the number of illiterate people will continue to grow and many developing countries are likely to fall short of universal primary education by the year 2000. Three main concerns regarding current systems of education may be expressed. The first is the inability of many parents in developing countries to send their children to schools because

of local economic and social conditions. The second concerns the paucity of educational opportunities for girls and young women, migrants, refugees, displaced persons, street children, indigenous youth minorities, young people in rural areas and young people with disabilities. The third concerns the quality of education, its relevance to employment and its usefulness for assisting young people in the transition to full adulthood, active citizenship and productive and gainful employment.

22. To encourage the development of educational and training systems more in line with the current and future needs of young people and their societies, it would be helpful to share experience and to investigate alternative arrangements, such as informal arrangements for the provision of basic literacy, job skills training and lifelong education.

23. Opportunities for young people to pursue advanced or university education, or engage in research or be trained for self-employment should be expanded in developing countries. Given the economic problems faced by such countries and the inadequacy of international assistance in this area, it is difficult to provide appropriate training for all young people, even though they are a country's chief economic asset.

24. Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are called upon to assist young people in developing countries to obtain education and training at all levels in developed countries as well as in developing countries, as well as mutual academic exchanges among developing countries, for example through exchanges among developing countries.

Proposals for action

1. Improving the level of basic education, skill training and literacy among youth

25. Priority should be given to achieving the goal of ensuring basic education for all (including literacy), mobilizing for that purpose all channels, agents and forms of education and training, in line with the concept of lifelong education. Special emphasis should also be given to the reform of education content and curricula, especially curricula that reinforce traditional female roles that deny women opportunities for full and equal partnership in society, at all levels, etc. focusing on scientific literacy, human moral values and learning of skills, adapted to the changing environment and to life in multi-ethnic societies and pluri-cultural societies. The importance of the development of information skills, that is skills for researching, accessing and using information, and informatics should be emphasized along with the importance of distance education. Non-governmental youth organizations and education organizations should develop youth-to-youth programmes for basic education, skill training and literacy. Consideration should be given to developing programmes enabling retired and elderly people to teach literacy to young people. Particular attention should be given to specific groups of youth in distressed circumstances, including indigenous, migrant and refugee youth, displaced persons, street children and poor youth in urban and rural areas, as

well as to special problems, including literacy problems, for blind youth and youth with other disabilities.

2. Cultural heritage and contemporary patterns of society

26. Governments should establish or strengthen programmes to educate young people in the cultural heritage of their societies and other societies and the world. Governments should institute, in cooperation with non-governmental youth organizations, travel and exchange programmes and youth camps to help youth understand cultural diversity at both the national and international levels, develop intercultural learning skills and participate in the preservation of the cultural heritage of their societies and other societies and the world around them. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in cooperation with interested Governments and non-governmental organizations, is requested to expand international programmes, such as youth camps, by which young people, particularly from developing countries, with different cultures may help restore major international cultural sites and engage in other cultural activities.

3. Promoting mutual respect and understanding and the ideals of peace, solidarity and tolerance among youth

27. Programmes aimed at learning peacemaking and dispute and conflict resolution should be encouraged and designed by Governments and educational institutions for introduction to schools at all levels. Children and youth should be informed of cultural differences in their own societies and given opportunities to learn about different cultures as well as tolerance and mutual respect for cultural and religious diversity. Governments and educational institutions should formulate and implement such educational programmes that promote and strengthen respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms; and enhance the values of peace, solidarity, tolerance, responsibility and respect for the diversity and rights of others.

4. Vocational and professional training

28. Governments and educational institutions, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, could establish or enhance vocational and technical training that is relevant to current and prospective employment conditions. Youth must be given the opportunity to access vocational and professional training and apprenticeship programmes that help them acquire entry-level jobs with growth opportunities and the ability to adjust to changes in labour demand.

5. Promoting human rights education

29. Governments should ensure that the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2005) is adequately observed in schools and educational institutions. In order to make youth aware of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well their societal responsibilities, and in

order to develop harmonious inter-community relations, mutual tolerance, mutual respect, equality between women and men, and tolerance for diversity, Governments should develop human rights education strategies targeted to youth, taking particular account of the human rights of women.

6. Training for enterprise programmes

30. Governments, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, should formulate model programmes of training for youth in individual and cooperative enterprises. They are encouraged to establish self-contained enterprise centres where young people may plan and test their enterprise venture concepts.

7. Infrastructure for training youth workers and youth leaders

31. Governments should assess the adequacy of facilities and programmes to train youth workers and youth leaders, including the adequacy of curricula and staff resources. On the basis of such assessments, Governments should plan and implement relevant training programmes. Non-governmental youth organizations should be encouraged and assisted to formulate and disseminate model training courses for use by member organizations.

32. Interested organizations should investigate possibilities to strengthen international youth worker and youth leadership training, with priority given to accepting participants from developing countries. In cooperation with concerned organizations that provide training opportunities for youth, including internships and volunteer programmes, establishment of an inventory of such programmes could also be explored.

B. Employment

33. Unemployment and underemployment among youth is a problem everywhere. It is, indeed, part of the larger struggle to create employment opportunities for all citizens. The problem has worsened in recent years because of the global recession, which has affected developing countries the most. The disturbing fact is that economic growth is not always accompanied by growth in employment. The difficulty of finding suitable employment is compounded by a host of other problems confronting young people, including illiteracy and insufficient training, and is worsened by periods of world economic slow-down and overall changing economic trends. In some countries, the influx of young people into the employment market has carried acute problems. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO), more than 100 million new jobs would have to be created within the next 20 years in order to provide suitable employment for the growing number of young people in the economically active populations of developing countries. The situation of girls and young women, as well as of young people with disabilities, refugee youth, displaced persons, street children, indigenous youth, migrant youth and minorities warrants urgent attention, bearing in mind the prohibition of forced labour and child labour.

34. The crisis of youth unemployment is also a crisis of opportunities for young people to acquire independently the minimum means of accommodation and housing necessary for setting up families and participate in the life of society. Advances in technology and communications, coupled with improved productivity, have imposed new challenges as well as new opportunities for employment. Young people are among the most severely affected by these developments. If effective solutions are not found, the costs to society will be much higher in the long run. Unemployment creates a wide range of social ills and young people are particularly susceptible to its damaging effects: the lack of skill development, low self-esteem, marginalization, impoverishment and the wasting of an enormous human resource.

Proposals for action

1. Opportunities for self-employment

35. Governments and organizations should create or promote grant schemes to provide seed money to encourage and support enterprise and employment programmes for young people. Businesses and enterprises could be encouraged to provide counterpart financial and technical support for such schemes. Cooperative schemes involving young people in production and marketing of goods and services could be considered. Formation of youth development banks could be considered. The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives is encouraged to develop models for cooperatives run by youth in developed and developing countries. Such models could include guidelines for management training and training in entrepreneurial techniques and marketing.

2. Employment opportunities for specific groups of the youth population

36. Within funds designated to promote youth employment, Governments should, as appropriate, designate resources for programmes supporting the efforts of young women, young people with disabilities, youth returning from military service, migrant youth, refugee youth, displaced persons, street children and indigenous youth. Youth organizations and youth themselves should be directly involved in the planning and implementation of these programmes.

3. Voluntary community services involving youth

37. Where they do not yet already exist, Governments should consider the establishment of youth voluntary service programmes. Such programmes could provide alternatives to military service, or might constitute a required element in educational curricula, depending on national policies and priorities. Youth camps, community service projects, environmental protection and intergenerational cooperation programmes should be included among the opportunities offered. Youth organizations should be directly involved in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating such voluntary service programmes. In addition, international cooperation programmes organized between

youth organizations in developed and developing countries should be included to promote intercultural understanding and development training.

4. Needs created by technological changes

38. Governments, in particular those of developed countries, should encourage the creation of employment opportunities for young people in fields that are rapidly evolving as a result of technological innovation. A subset of the employment data compiled by Governments should track the employment of youth into those fields marked by newly emerging technologies. Measures should be taken to provide ongoing training in this area for youth.

39. Special attention should be paid to developing and disseminating approaches that promote flexibility in training systems and collaboration between training institutions and employers, especially for young people in high-technology industries.

C. Hunger and poverty

40. Over 1 billion people in the world today live in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries, particularly in rural areas of low-income countries of Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean and the least developed countries. Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion; it is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and civil and socio-cultural life. Poverty is inseparably linked to lack of access to or control over resources, including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections. Without those resources, people have limited access to institutions, markets, employment and public services. Young people are particularly vulnerable to this situation. Therefore, specific measures are needed to address the juvenilization and feminization of poverty.

41. Hunger and malnutrition remain among the most serious and intractable threats to humanity, often preventing youth and children from taking part in society. Hunger is the result of many factors: mismanagement of food production and distribution; poor accessibility; maldistribution of financial resources; unwise exploitation of natural resources; unsustainable patterns of consumption; environmental pollution; natural and human-made disasters; conflicts between traditional and contemporary production systems; irrational population growth; and armed conflicts.

Proposals for action

1. Making farming more rewarding and life in agricultural areas more attractive

42. Governments should enhance educational and cultural services and other incentives in rural areas to make them more attractive to young people. Experimental farming programmes directed towards young people should be initiated, and extension services expanded to maintain improvements in agricultural production and marketing.

43. Local and national Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should organize cultural events that enhance exchanges between urban and rural youth. Youth organizations should be encouraged and assisted to organize conventions and meetings in rural areas, with special efforts to enlist the cooperation of rural populations, including rural youth.

2. Skill-training for income-generation by young people

44. Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should develop training programmes for youth which improve methods of agricultural production and marketing. Training should be based on rural economic needs and the needs of young people in rural areas for the development of production and the achievement of food security. Attention should be given in such programmes to young women, youth retention in rural areas, youth returning to rural areas from the cities, young people with disabilities, refugee and migrant youth, displaced persons and street children, indigenous youth, youth returning from military service and youth living in areas of resolved conflicts.

3. Land grants for young people

45. Governments should provide grants of land to youth and youth organizations, supported by financial and technical assistance and training. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization are invited to document and disseminate information about national experience with land-grant and settlement schemes for use by Governments.

46. Governments, consistent with their rural development schemes and with the assistance of international organizations, as appropriate, are encouraged to work with volunteer youth organizations on projects which enhance and maintain the rural and urban environments.

4. Cooperation between urban and rural youth in food production and distribution

47. Non-governmental organizations should organize direct-marketing groups, including production and distribution cooperatives, to improve current marketing systems and to ensure that young farmers have access to them. The aim of such

groups should be to reduce food shortages and losses from defective systems of food storage and transport to markets.

D. Health

48. Young people in some parts of the world suffer from poor health as a result of societal conditions, including such factors as customary attitudes and harmful traditional practices and in some cases by their own actions. Poor health is often caused by lack of healthy environments and by missing support systems in everyday life for health promoting patterns of behaviour, by lack of information and by inadequate or inappropriate health services. Problems are, among others, the lack of safe and sanitary living environments, malnutrition, the risk of infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, the growing consumption of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity, resulting in unintentional injuries.

49. The reproductive health needs of adolescents have been largely ignored. In many countries, there is a lack of information and services available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health and to protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

Proposals for action

1. Provision of basic health services

50. All young people should have access to basic health services in the interest of all and of society as a whole. It is the indispensable responsibility of each Government to mobilize the necessary awareness, resources and channels. These measures should be supported by a favourable international economic environment and cooperation.

51. Efforts should be expedited to achieve the goals of national Health-for-All strategies, based on equality and social justice in line with the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care, by developing or updating country action plans or programmes to ensure universal, non-discriminatory access to basic health services, including sanitation and drinking water, to protect health, and to promote nutrition education and preventive health programmes.

52. Support should be provided for stronger, better coordinated global actions against major diseases that take a heavy toll of human lives, such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, typhoid fever and HIV/AIDS; in this context, support should be continued for the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

53. Young people in some parts of the world suffer from poor health as a result of societal conditions, as well as their own actions. Poor health is often caused by lack of information and lack of health services for youth, mostly in developing countries. The resulting problems are, among others, sexually transmitted diseases, including infection with the human immunodeficiency virus

(HIV); early pregnancies; lack of hygiene and sanitation, leading to infection, infestation and diarrhoea; genetic and congenital diseases; psychological and mental diseases; narcotic and psychotropic drug abuse; misuse of alcohol and tobacco; unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity, resulting in unintentional injuries; malnutrition; and poor spacing of births.

2. Development of health education

54. Governments should include, in the curricula of educational institutions at the primary and secondary levels, programmes focusing on primary health knowledge and practices. Particular emphasis should be placed on the understanding of basic hygiene requirements and the need to develop and sustain a healthy environment. These programmes need to be developed in full awareness of the needs and priorities of young people and with their involvement.

55. Cooperation among Governments and educational and health institutions should be encouraged in order to promote personal responsibility for a healthy lifestyle and provide the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including teaching the legal, social and health consequences of behaviour that poses health risks.

3. Promotion of health services, including sexual and reproductive health and development of relevant education programmes in those fields

56. Governments, with the involvement of youth and other relevant organizations, should ensure the implementation of the commitments made in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as established in the report of that Conference, in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development, and in the Declaration and the Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as in the relevant human rights instruments, to meet the health needs of youth. The United Nations Population Fund and other interested United Nations organizations should continue to take effective steps on these issues. The reproductive health needs of adolescents as a group have been largely ignored to date by existing reproductive health services. The response of societies to the reproductive health needs of adolescents should be based on information that helps them attain a level of maturity required to make responsible decisions. In particular, information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and subsequent risk of infertility. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction. This effort is uniquely important for the health of young women and their children, for women's self-determination and, in many countries, for efforts to slow the momentum of population growth. Motherhood at a very young age entails a risk of maternal death that is much greater than average, and the children of young mothers have higher levels of morbidity and mortality. Early child-bearing continues to be an impediment to improvements in the educational, economic and social status of women in all

parts of the world. Overall for young women, early marriage and early motherhood can severely curtail educational and employment opportunities and are likely to have a long-term adverse impact on their and their children's quality of life.

57. Governments should develop comprehensive sexual and reproductive health-care services and provide young people access to those services including, inter alia, education and services in family planning consistent with the results of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNFPA and other interested United Nations organizations are to be encouraged to continue assigning high priority to promoting adolescent reproductive health.

4. HIV infection and AIDS among young people

58. Governments should develop accessible, available and affordable primary health care services of high quality, including sexual and reproductive health care, as well as education programmes, including those related to sexually transmitted disease, including HIV/AIDS, for youth. Continued international cooperation and collective global efforts are necessary for the containment of HIV/AIDS.

5. Promotion of good sanitation and hygiene practices

59. Governments, in cooperation with youth and volunteer organizations, should promote the establishment of youth health associations to promote good sanitation and hygiene programmes.

6. Prevention of disease and illness among youth resulting from poor health practices

60. Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should promote healthier lifestyles and, in this context, should investigate the possibility of adopting policies for discouraging drug, tobacco and alcohol abuse, including possibly banning advertisements of tobacco and alcohol. They should also undertake programmes that inform young people about the adverse effects of drug and alcohol abuse and tobacco addiction.

61. Programmes should be instituted, with the appropriate assistance of the United Nations bodies and organizations concerned, to train medical, paramedical, educational and youth work personnel in health issues of particular concern to young people, including healthy lifestyles. Research into such issues should be promoted, particularly research into the effects and treatment of drug abuse and addiction. Youth organizations should be enlisted in these efforts.

7. Elimination of sexual abuse of young people

62. As recommended by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, and bearing in mind that young women are specially vulnerable, Governments should cooperate at the international level and take effective steps, including specific preventive measures to protect children, adolescents and youth from neglect, abandonment and all types of exploitation and abuse, such as abduction, rape and incest, pornography, trafficking and acts of paedophilia, as well as from commercial exploitation resulting from pornography and prostitution. 7/ Governments should enact and enforce legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation wherever it exists and give vigorous support to efforts among non-governmental and community organizations and religious institutions to eliminate such practices. 8/

8. Combating malnutrition among young people

63. Governments should promote post-primary-school and out-of-school health projects by individuals and youth organizations, emphasizing information on healthy eating practices. School lunch programmes, provision of food supplements and similar services should be available whenever possible to help ensure proper diets for young people.

E. Environment

64. The deterioration of the natural environment is one of the principal concerns of young people world wide as it has direct implications for their well-being at present and in the future. The natural environment must be maintained and preserved for both present and future generations. The causes of environmental degradation must be addressed. The environmentally friendly use of natural resources and environmentally sustainable economic growth will improve human life. Sustainable development has become a key element in the programmes of youth organizations throughout the world. While every segment of society is responsible for maintaining the environmental integrity of the community, youth have a special interest in maintaining a healthy environment because they will be the ones to inherit it.

Proposals for action

1. Integration of environmental education and training into education and training programmes

65. Emphasis should be given in school curricula to environmental education. Training programmes should be provided to inform teachers of the environmental aspects of their subject-matter and to enable them to educate youth on environmentally friendly habits.

66. The participation of youth groups in gathering environmental data and in understanding ecological systems and actual environmental action should be

encouraged as a means of improving both their knowledge of the environment and their personal engagement in caring for the environment.

2. Facilitating the international dissemination of information on environmental issues to, and the use of environmentally sound technologies by, youth

67. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in cooperation with Governments and non-governmental youth organizations, is invited to intensify production of information materials illustrating the global dimension, its origins and interrelated effects of environmental degradation and describing the outcome of initiatives undertaken in developing and developed countries as well as countries with economies in transition. UNEP is requested to continue its efforts to disseminate and exchange information with and among youth organizations. Governments should encourage and assist youth organizations to initiate and develop youth-to-youth contacts through town-twinning and similar programmes in order to share the experience gained in different countries.

68. Relevant United Nations organizations and institutions and governments of technologically advanced countries are encouraged to help spread the use of environmentally sound technologies in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition and to train youth in making use of such technologies in protecting and conserving the environment.

3. Strengthening participation of youth in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment

69. Governments and youth organizations should initiate programmes to promote participation in tree planting, forestry, combating of desert creep, waste reduction, recycling and other sound environmental practices. The participation of young people and their organizations in such programmes can provide good training and encourage awareness and action. Waste management programmes may represent potential income-generating activities that provide opportunities for employment.

70. As recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the involvement of youth in environment and development decision-making is critical to the implementation of policies of sustainable development. Young people should be involved in designing and implementing appropriate environmental policies.

4. Enhancing the role of the media as a tool for widespread dissemination of environmental issues to the general youth public

71. Governments should, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, encourage the media and advertising agencies to develop programmes to ensure widespread dissemination of information on environmental issues to continue to raise awareness thereof among youth.

72. Governments should establish procedures allowing for consultation and possible participation of youth of both genders in decision-making processes with regard to the environment, involving youth at the local, national and regional levels.

F. Drug abuse

73. The vulnerability of young people to drug abuse has in recent years become a major concern. The consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly for young men and women, are all too apparent. Violence, particularly street violence, often results from drug abuse and illicit drug networks.

74. As the number of psychotropic drugs increases steadily and their effects and appropriate prescriptive practices are often not fully known, some patients may not be adequately treated and others may become over-medicated. Misuse of prescription drugs, self-medication with tranquillizers, sleeping-pills and stimulants can also create serious problems, particularly in countries and regions where distribution controls are weak and habit-forming drugs are purchased abroad or diverted from licit channels of distribution. In this context the vulnerability of young people raises a particular problem and specific measures are therefore needed.

75. The international community places particular emphasis on reducing the demand for and supply of illegal drugs and preventing misuse. Supply reduction includes combating international illicit drug trafficking. Drug misuse prevention initiatives range from discouraging people from taking drugs, thus preventing involuntary addiction, to helping those who are misusing drugs to stop doing so. Treatment programmes need to recognize that drug misuse is a chronic relapsing condition. It is essential for programmes to be adapted to the social and cultural context and for there to be effective cooperation between various approaches to treatment. To this end, national initiatives and measures to combat illicit drug trafficking should be fully supported and reinforced at the regional and international levels.

76. Drug control strategies at the national and international levels consistently emphasize initiatives aimed at reducing drug abuse among young people. This is reflected in the resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and in the demand reduction programmes of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

Proposals for action

1. Participation of youth organizations and youth in demand reduction programmes for young people

77. To be effective, demand reduction programmes should be targeted at all young people, particularly those at risk, and the content of the programmes should respond directly to the interests and concerns of those young people. Preventive education programmes showing the dangers of drug misuse are

particularly important. Increasing opportunities for gainful employment and activities which provide recreation and opportunities to develop a variety of skills are important in helping young people to resist drugs. Youth organizations can play a key role in designing and implementing education programmes and individual counselling to encourage the integration of youth into the community, to develop healthy lifestyles and to raise awareness of the damaging impact of drugs. The programmes could include training of youth leaders in communication and counselling skills.

78. Government entities, in cooperation with relevant agencies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations, should cooperate in carrying out demand reduction programmes for illicit drugs, tobacco and alcohol.

2. Training medical and paramedical students in the rational use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances

79. The World Health Organization, associations of the medical and paramedical professions and pharmaceutical corporations and medical faculties and institutions could be asked to develop model training courses and disseminate information material on the proper handling of drugs and the early identification and diagnosis of substance abuse.

3. Treatment and rehabilitation of young people who are drug abusers or drug-dependent and young alcoholics and tobacco users

80. Research has been undertaken into the possibility of identifying medication to block cravings for specific drugs without creating secondary dependency, but much remains to be done in this area. The need for medical and social research in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse as well as rehabilitation, has become more urgent, particularly with the world-wide increase in abuse and addiction among young people. In such research, emphasis should be given to the fact that intravenous substance abuse raises the risk of communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, arising from the sharing of needles and other injection equipment. The fruits of all such research should be shared globally.

81. Graduate students in faculties of medicine and chemistry, or in the social services and public administration, could be encouraged to focus their research on such complex issues as medical treatment of drug-dependent persons and abusers, administration of the public health components of drug treatment and rehabilitation, surveys of the effectiveness of different types and combinations of treatment and comparable rates of recidivism.

82. Research on issues such as the medical treatment and the rehabilitation of young drug abusers, including the conduct of different types of treatment, the presence of recidivism and the administrative aspects of drug treatment and the inclusion of students in the relevant faculties in such research, should be encouraged.

83. In cooperation with the institutions of civil society and the private sector, drug abuse prevention should be promoted as should preventive education for children and youth, rehabilitation and education programmes for former drug and alcohol addicts, especially children and youth, in order to enable them to obtain productive employment and achieve the independence, dignity and responsibility for a drug-free, crime-free productive life. Of particular interest is the development of treatment techniques involving the family setting and peer groups. Young people can make significant contributions by participating in peer group therapy to facilitate the acceptance of young drug-dependent persons and abusers upon their re-entry into society. Direct participation in rehabilitation therapy entails close cooperation between youth groups and other community and health services. WHO and other world-wide medical and mental health organizations could be requested to set guidelines for continuing research and for carrying out comparable programmes in different settings, whose effectiveness could be evaluated over a given period of time.

4. Care for young drug abusers and drug-dependent suspects and offenders in the criminal justice and prison system

84. Authorities should consider strategies to prevent exposure to drug abuse and dependence among young people suspected or convicted of criminal offences. Such strategies could include alternative measures, such as daily reporting to police stations or requirements for regular visits to parole officers, and fulfilment of a specified number of hours of community service.

85. Prison authorities should cooperate closely with law enforcement agencies to keep drugs out of the prison system. Prison personnel should be discouraged from tolerating the presence of drugs in penal institutions.

86. Young prisoners who are already drug-dependent should be targeted as priority candidates for treatment and rehabilitation services and should be segregated as appropriate. Guidelines and standard minimum rules should be prepared to assist national authorities in law enforcement and prison systems in maintaining the necessary controls and initiating treatment and rehabilitation services. Action along these lines constitutes a long-term advantage to society, as the cycle of dependence, release, repeated offences and repeated incarcerations constitutes a heavy burden on the criminal justice system, quite apart from the wasted lives and personal tragedies which result from drug dependence and criminal behaviour.

G. Juvenile delinquency

87. Juvenile crime and delinquency are serious problems all over the world. Their intensity and gravity depend mostly on the social, economic and cultural settings of each country. There is evidence, however, of an apparent world-wide increase in juvenile criminality combined with economic recession, especially in marginal sectors of urban centres. In many cases, youth offenders are "street children" who have been exposed to violence in their immediate social environment, either as observers or as victims. Their basic education, when they have it, is poor; their primary socialization from the family is too often

inadequate; and their socio-economic environment is shaped by poverty and destitution. Rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system, approaches to the prevention of violence and crime should thus include measures to support equality and justice and to combat poverty and to reduce hopelessness among young people.

Proposals for action

1. Priority to preventive measures

88. Governments should give priority to issues and problems of juvenile delinquency and youth criminality, with particular attention to preventive policies and programmes. Rural areas should be provided with adequate socio-economic and administrative opportunities and services that could discourage young people from migrating to urban areas. Youth from poor urban settings should have available specific educational, employment and leisure programmes, particularly during long school holidays. Young people who drop out of school or come from broken families should benefit from specific social programmes that help them build self-esteem and confidence conducive to responsible adulthood.

2. Prevention of violence

89. Governments and other relevant organizations, particularly youth organizations, should consider organizing information campaigns, educational and training programmes in order to sensitize youth to the personally and socially detrimental effects of violence in the family, community and society, teach them how to communicate without violence, and promote training so that they can protect themselves and others against violence. Governments should also develop programmes to promote tolerance and better understanding among youth, with a view to eradicating contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance and thereby prevent violence.

90. To prevent violence and crime, the development of social organization, particularly through youth organizations and community involvement, should be fostered by a supportive social policy and within a legal framework. Government assistance should focus on facilitating the abilities of community and youth organizations to express and evaluate their needs concerning the prevention of violence and crime, to formulate and implement actions for themselves, and to cooperate with each other.

3. Rehabilitation services and programmes

91. Destitution, poor living conditions, inadequate education, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of leisure-time activities are factors that marginalize young people, which makes some of them vulnerable to exploitation as well as to involvement in criminal and other deviant behaviour. If preventive measures address the very causes of criminality, rehabilitation programmes and services should be made available to those who already have a criminal history.

Mostly, youth delinquency begins with petty offences such as robbery or violent behaviour, that can be easily traced and corrected through institutions and community and family environments. Indeed law enforcement should be a part of rehabilitation measures. Finally, the human rights of young people who are imprisoned should be protected and principles of penal majority according to penal laws should be given great attention.

H. Leisure-time activities

92. The importance of leisure-time activities in the psychological, cognitive and physical development of young people is recognized in any society. Leisure-time activities include games, sports, cultural events, entertainment and community service. Appropriate leisure programmes for youth are elements of any measure aimed at fighting social ills, such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and other deviant behaviour. While leisure programmes can contribute greatly to the development of the physical, intellectual and emotional potential of young people, they should be designed with due care and concern so that they are not used as a means for excluding youth from participating in other aspects of social life or for indoctrinating them. Leisure-time activity programmes should be made freely available to young people.

Proposals for action

1. Leisure-time activities as an integral part of youth policies and programmes

93. In planning, designing and implementing youth policies and programmes, Governments should recognize the importance of leisure-time activities, with the active involvement of youth organizations. The importance given to such activities should be reflected in appropriate funding.

94. Governments are invited to establish public libraries, cultural centres and other cultural facilities in rural and urban areas with the aid of international organizations, and to provide assistance to young people active in the fields of drama, the fine arts, music and other forms of cultural expression.

95. Governments are invited to encourage the participation of young people in tourism, international cultural events, sports and all other activities of special interest to youth.

2. Leisure-time activities as elements of educational programmes

96. A means by which Governments may accord priority to leisure-time activities is to provide educational institutions with resources to develop the infrastructure required for their establishment. In addition, leisure-time activities could be part of the regular school curriculum.

3. Leisure-time activities in urban planning and rural development

97. National Governments as well as local authorities and community development agencies should incorporate leisure-time activity programmes and facilities in urban planning, giving particular attention to areas with a high human concentration. Equally, rural development programmes should pay due attention to the leisure needs of rural youth.

4. Leisure-time activities and the media

98. Communications media should be encouraged to promote youth understanding and awareness of all aspects of social integration, including tolerance and non-violent behaviour.

I. Girls and young women

99. One of the most important tasks of youth policy is to improve the situation of girls and young women. Governments therefore should implement their obligations under international human rights instruments as well as implementing the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights and other programmes of relevant United Nations conferences. Girls are often treated as inferior and are socialized to put themselves last, thus undermining their self-esteem. Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong downward spiral of deprivation and exclusion from the social mainstream. Negative cultural attitudes and practices as well as gender-based educational processes including curricula, educational materials and practices, teachers' attitudes and classroom interaction, reinforce existing gender inequalities.

Proposals for action

1. Discrimination

100. Discrimination and neglect in childhood can initiate a lifelong exclusion from the society. Action should be taken to eliminate discrimination against girls and young women and ensure their full enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms through comprehensive policies, plans of action and programmes on the basis of equality.

2. Education

101. Universal and equal access to and completion of primary education for girls and young women as well as equal access to secondary and higher education should be ensured. A framework should be provided for the development of educational materials and practices that are gender balanced and promote an educational

setting that eliminates all barriers that impede the schooling of girls and young women, including married and/or pregnant girls and young women.

3. Health

102. Discrimination against girls and young women should be eliminated in health and nutrition. The removal of discriminatory laws and practices against girls and young women in food allocation and nutrition should be promoted, and access should be ensured to health services in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

4. Employment

103. Girls and young women should be protected from economic and related forms of exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, in conformity with the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Equal access for young women in all employment opportunities should be promoted and their participation in the traditionally male-dominated sectors should be encouraged.

5. Violence

104. Governments should cooperate at the international level and enact and enforce legislation protecting girls and young women from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, genital mutilation, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography. Age appropriate safe and confidential programmes and support services to assist girls and young women who are subjected to violence should be developed in cooperation with relevant non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations as appropriate.

J. Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making

105. The capacity of progress of our societies is based, among other elements, in their capacity to incorporate the contribution and responsibility of youth in the building and designing of its future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

106. Any efforts and proposed actions on the other priority areas, considered in this programme are, in a certain way, conditioned by enabling economic, social and political participation of youth, as a matter of critical importance.

107. Youth organizations are important for developing skills necessary for effective participation in society, promoting tolerance, increased cooperation and exchanges between youth organizations.

Proposals for action

108. The following actions are proposed:

(a) Strengthening youth's access to information in order to enable them to make better use of their opportunities to participate;

(b) Developing and/or strengthening opportunities for youth to learn their rights and responsibilities, promoting social, developmental and environmental participation and removing obstacles that affect their full contribution to society and fully respecting, inter alia, freedom of association;

(c) Encouraging and promoting youth association through financial, educational and technical support for youth association and promotion of their activities;

(d) Taking into account the contribution of youth in the design, implementing and evaluating national policies and plans affecting their concerns;

(e) Encouraging increased cooperation and exchange between youth organizations;

(f) Inviting Governments to strengthen the involvement of young people in international forums, inter alia, by considering the inclusion of youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly.

V. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

109. Effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth will require significant expressions of commitment by organizations and institutions responsible for its adoption and implementation and the involvement of such organizations and especially of youth from all sectors of society. Without such commitment by governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental entities at the national, regional and international levels, the Programme of Action will remain little more than a global statement of intent and general standard for action.

110. Therefore the development of an overall system of enabling mechanisms is necessary for the Programme of Action to be implemented. Such mechanisms should engage, on a continuing basis, the human, political, economic, financial and sociocultural resources necessary to ensure that the Programme of Action is implemented efficiently and effectively.

111. Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth is ultimately the responsibility of Governments with the support of the international community and in cooperation, as appropriate, with the non-governmental and private

sectors. Translation of the Programme's proposals for action into specific plans, targets and law will be influenced by national priorities, resources and historical experience. In this process, Governments can be assisted, at their request, by regional and international organizations.

112. In implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth, Governments, youth organizations and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes in accordance with the results of the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit on Social Development, and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

A. National level

113. Governments that have not already done so are urged to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy as a means of addressing youth-related concerns. This should be done as part of a continuing process of review and assessment of the situation of youth, formulation of a cross-sectoral national youth programme of action in terms of specific, time-bound objectives, and systematic evaluation of progress achieved and obstacles encountered.

114. Reinforcing youth-related concerns in development activities can be facilitated through the existence of multilevel mechanisms for consultation, dissemination of information, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. These should be cross-sectoral in nature and multidisciplinary in approach and should include the participation of youth-related departments and ministries, national non-governmental youth organizations and the private sector.

115. Special and additional efforts may be required to develop and disseminate model frameworks for integrated policies and to identify and organize an appropriate division of responsibilities among both governmental and non-governmental entities concerned with youth-related issues. Special and additional efforts could also be directed towards strengthening national capacities for data collection and dissemination of information, research and policy studies, planning, implementation and coordination, and training and advisory services.

116. National coordinating mechanisms should be appropriately strengthened for integrated youth policies and programmes. Where such mechanisms do not exist, Governments are urged to promote their establishment on a multilevel and cross-sectoral basis.

B. Regional cooperation

117. The activities of the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation with concerned regional intergovernmental and non-governmental youth and youth-related organizations, are essential complements to national and global action aimed at building national capacities.

118. Regional commissions, within their existing mandates, are urged to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action through incorporation of its goals in their plans and to undertake comprehensive reviews of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered and identify options to further regional-level action.

119. Regional intergovernmental meetings of ministers responsible for youth, in cooperation with the concerned United Nations regional commissions, regional intergovernmental organizations and regional youth non-governmental organizations, can make particular contributions to the formulation, implementation, coordination and evaluation of action at the regional level, including periodic monitoring of regional youth programmes.

120. Data collection, dissemination of information, research and policy studies, interorganizational coordination and technical cooperation, training seminars and advisory services are among the measures which can be provided on request at the regional level to promote, implement and evaluate youth programmes.

121. Regional youth non-governmental organizations, regional offices of bodies and organizations of the United Nations system and regional intergovernmental organizations concerned with youth are invited to consider meeting on a biennial basis to review and discuss issues and trends and identify proposals for regional and subregional cooperation. United Nations regional commissions are also invited to play an essential role through the provision of a suitable venue and appropriate input regarding regional action.

C. International cooperation

122. An essential role for international cooperation is to promote conditions conducive to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth at all levels. Means available include policy-level debates at the policy level and decisions at the intergovernmental level, global monitoring of issues and trends, data collection and dissemination of information, research and studies, planning and coordination, technical cooperation, and outreach and partnership among interested constituencies from both the non-governmental and private sectors.

123. In its capacity as the subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council responsible for global social development issues, the Commission for Social Development has an important role to play as the focal point for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The Commission is called upon to continue the policy-level dialogue on youth for policy coordination and for periodic monitoring of issues and trends.

124. Current regional and interregional conferences of ministers responsible for youth affairs in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Asia are invited to intensify cooperation among each other and to consider meeting regularly at the international level under the aegis of the United Nations. Such meetings could provide an effective forum for a focused global dialogue on youth-related issues.

125. Youth-related bodies and organizations of the United Nations system are the above-mentioned conferences. In this connection, the existing ad hoc inter-agency group on youth should meet annually and invite all the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system concerned and related intergovernmental organizations to discuss ways and means by which they can further and promote the implementation of the Programme of Action on a coordinated basis.

126. Effective channels of communication between non-governmental youth organizations and the United Nations system are essential for dialogue and consultations on the situation of youth and implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The General Assembly has repeatedly stressed the importance of channels of communication in the field of youth. The Youth Forum of the United Nations system could contribute to Programme implementation through the identification and promotion of joint initiatives to further Programme objectives so that they better reflect the interests of youth.

1. Data collection and dissemination of information

127. Capacities to collect, analyse and present data in a timely and accurate fashion are essential for effective planning and target-setting, for monitoring issues and trends and for evaluating progress achieved in implementing the World Programme of Action for Youth. Special attention should be directed towards building national capacities and institutions to collect and compile regularly socio-economic data series that are both cross-sectional and disaggregated by cohort. To this end, interested centres and institutions may wish to consider the possibility of jointly strengthening or establishing, in cooperation with the United Nations, networks concerned with collection of data and publication of statistics and to realize thereby greater economies of scale in the development and dissemination of statistics in the field of youth.

128. Major contributions are currently being made by the United Nations related to data and statistics in the field of youth. Such contributions include the socio-economic data collection and statistical development activities of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat; the youth policies and programmes information activities of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development; the educational and literacy data collection activities of UNESCO; and the youth advisory networks of the United Nations Environment Programme. Concerned bodies and agencies of the United Nations system are urged to explore ways and means of achieving greater coherence in data collection and the publication of statistics. This could include programme planning and coordination on an inter-agency basis. For example, the data bank programme on adolescent health of the World Health Organization is coordinated with the work of the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. Other bodies and agencies of the United Nations system are invited to contribute data in their respective areas of expertise to an integrated socio-economic data bank on youth. For instance, the international drug abuse assessment system of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme is urged to consider including a component on youth and drugs. An inventory of innovative youth policies, programmes and projects could be coordinated and made available to interested users by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable

Development. Other topics that could be considered for joint action include juvenile delinquency, runaways and homeless youth.

129. Public information and communications are equally important in building awareness of youth issues, as well as a consensus on appropriate planning and action. The bodies and organizations of the United Nations system concerned are urged, as a matter of priority, to review publications currently produced and identify ways in which these publications can better promote the Programme of Action and areas in which they may need to be complemented through the production of leaflets and posters in connection with special events.

130. To encourage widespread awareness of and support for the Programme of Action, Governments, non-governmental organizations and, as appropriate, the private sector, are urged to consider the possibility of preparing both printed and audiovisual materials related to areas of concern in the Programme of Action. This could be carried out with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations and materials could be disseminated through United Nations public information channels. In addition young people and youth organizations are urged to identify and plan information activities that focus on priority issues, which they would undertake within the context of the Programme of Action.

2. Research and policy studies

131. Comparative studies on issues and trends concerning youth are essential to the continuous expansion and development of the global body of knowledge on relevant theory, concepts and methods. International, regional and national research centres and institutions concerned with youth-related issues are urged to consider the possibility of establishing cooperative relationships with the United Nations to ensure effective links between the implementation of the Programme of Action and relevant research and studies.

132. A closely related concern is cooperation in strengthening and improving national capacities for the research design, conduct and dissemination of relevant studies on the situation of young people.

133. A third concern is improved planning and coordination of the scarce human and financial resources available so that appropriate attention is accorded to initiatives at all levels, undertaken by young people, related to priority areas identified in the Programme of Action, to the identification and assessment of issues and trends, and to the review and evaluation of policy initiatives.

3. Planning and coordination

134. Using the mechanisms currently available within the United Nations system for planning, programming and coordinating activities concerning youth, interested bodies and organizations of the United Nations system are urged to review their medium-term planning process to give appropriate consideration to reinforcing a youth perspective in their activities. They are also urged to identify current and projected programme activities that correspond to the

priorities of the Programme of Action so that these activities can be reinforced throughout the system. Appropriate attention should be directed towards identifying opportunities for joint planning among interested members of the system so that joint action may be undertaken that reflects their respective areas of competence and that is of direct interest to young people or that responds to priority needs of young people in special circumstances.

135. A complementary mechanism for coordination is provided by the channels that have been developed between the United Nations and intergovernmental and non-governmental youth organizations. Such mechanisms require appropriate strengthening to enable them to respond better to priorities for action, as identified in the Programme of Action.

4. Technical cooperation, training and advisory services

136. Technical cooperation is an essential means for building national capacities and institutional capabilities. Bodies and organizations of the United Nations system that have not already done so are urged to review and assess their range of programmatic and operational activities in the light of priorities for action identified in the Programme of Action and to reinforce a youth dimension in technical cooperation activities. In this regard, special attention should be directed towards measures that will serve to promote expanded opportunities for international technical assistance and advisory services in the field of youth as a means of building expanded and strengthened networks of institutions and organizations.

137. There is a need to continue to improve the impact of technical cooperation activities carried out by the United Nations system, including those that relate to youth activities. The United Nations system must continue to assist Governments, at their request, in the formulation of national plans and strategies relating to youth issues and to give appropriate support to youth activities within the framework of national development plans and strategies. National execution should be the preferred modality for the implementation of projects and programmes.

138. The organization, on an inter-agency basis, of missions to review, assess and plan technical cooperation concerning youth, available on request to Governments, represents a specific contribution by the United Nations system to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

139. The United Nations Youth Fund represents a unique resource to support catalytic and innovative action concerning youth. Programme implementation can be furthered through the Fund's support, in both a technical and a financial sense, of pilot action, studies and technical exchanges on issues concerning youth that encourage the participation of youth in devising and carrying out projects and whose short time-frames often make it difficult to obtain needed support from conventional budgeting processes. The capacities of the Fund for innovative action are, however, limited in the light of Programme priorities, and interested Governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are invited to consider the possibility of supporting the activities of the Fund on a predictable and sustained basis. To this end, the parties

concerned may wish to consider the possibility of constituting an advisory body at an appropriate level to review the application of the terms of reference of the Fund, priorities and means of strengthening its capacities.

5. Outreach and partnership among specialized constituencies

140. A crucial element in implementing the Programme of Action is recognition that governmental action alone is not sufficient to ensure its success, rather it should further be complemented by the support of the international community. This process will also require both systematic outreach and partnership among the Programme's many constituencies in both the non-governmental and private sectors.

141. A critical first step is phased expansion and regularization of channels of communication between the United Nations and non-governmental youth organizations to include representatives of interested private sector organizations. This would build upon the provisions of the General Assembly in resolution 45/103 concerning the involvement of youth and non-governmental youth organizations in formulation of the Programme of Action. Youth, youth-related organizations and interested private sector organizations are urged to identify, in partnership with Governments, ways in which they could contribute to action at the local level to implement the Programme, and to the periodic review, appraisal and formulation of options to achieve its goals and objectives.

142. Implementation of the Programme of Action offers important opportunities to expand technical and cultural exchanges among young people through new partnerships in both the public and private sectors; to identify and test improved ways to leverage public resources, in partnership with the non-governmental and private sectors, to further Programme priorities; and to encourage and plan jointly innovative approaches to critical issues concerning youth.

143. Relevant voluntary organizations, particularly those concerned with education, employment, juvenile justice, youth development, health, hunger, ecology and the environment, and drug abuse, can further Programme implementation by encouraging involvement of young people in their programme planning and field activities. The Programme of Action can contribute to the work of such organizations because it provides a global policy framework for consultation and coordination.

Notes

1/ General Assembly resolution 2037 (XX).

2/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

3/ Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

4/ Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994 (A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

5/ Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

6/ See A/CONF.177/20 (forthcoming).

7/ Report of the International Conference on Population and Development ..., chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 6.9.

8/ Ibid., para. 4.22.